

# **The Sister's role – The Bible's large picture**

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An assessment of the method of argument  
in the “All one in Christ Jesus” papers

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*The exception proves the rule*

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# Preface

In recent times there has been much comment upon the roles of our sisters in Christadelphian ecclesias and in particular their position in respect to leadership and speaking. The matter was heightened when in late 2007, an internet edition of two volumes, entitled, “All One in Christ Jesus” – Volume I (New Testament) and Volume II (Old Testament) became widely available to many ecclesias. These works amounted to more than 200 pages and represented a very strong commitment to revise and overthrow the established understanding of the role of sisters in the ecclesia as it has been with us from our beginnings.

Brother Jonathan Burke’s contribution to this ensuing debate has been to elucidate the rationale of exposition in “All One” (OT and NT). Many readers have felt a difficulty in this area. A feature of “All One” is to throw into conjecture the understanding of the specific Bible texts upon which all ecclesias had based their practice; then, having disturbed the foundation passages, to advocate a revolutionary position based upon incidental inferences in other passages of the Bible. It is a proverb that the exception proves the rule but it would seem here that the exception becomes the rule! In this booklet bro Burke seeks to analyse the rationality of this approach and it is felt that his work is a significant and timely contribution to the present discussion.

There is a very large answer to the matter before us, which overwhelmingly presents the intention of God. In the Old Testament there were God, Moses, the High Priest, the King, the priests the Levites and the prophets: these shouldered the responsibility of judgment, leadership and teaching in the public religion of the nation. In the New Testament there are the Father, the Son, the Apostles, the elders and the deacons, upon whom rested the governance and teaching of the ecclesia. Without dispute these offices were held by males, in both dispensations.

Is it wise for us to overturn such foundations? Surely it is only the philosophies of the modern world that have made us look to change that which our God has so obviously arranged. Division of thought among us is the only possibility if such views are advocated. In these evil latter days we could surely do without this further diversion.

We have confidence that many will enjoy the reasoning of this treatise. Please note that it does not seek to answer or comment on the details of all the Bible passages related to the subject. That has been done in other works.

In conclusion we should pay tribute to the wonderful contribution made by our sisters in our ecclesial and domestic lives. Their role is indispensable. All the

brethren know this; from childhood to aging years the care and wisdom of the mothers in Israel is an encouraging and essential role. Even the Lord knew that in his life; he was born of a dear and loving mother; she was still there at the cross and numbered among the earliest disciples after his resurrection. In the height of his agony he ensured her well-being in the hands of the apostle John.

Any community that does not honour the beauty and faithfulness of motherhood is doomed to deteriorate. And there are many sisters in our meetings who, though not natural mothers in their own right, are yet mothers for many others, young and old. All of our ecclesias are tintured with the willing service of our sisters in many aspects of our ecclesial life.

No career can be higher than this. It's the way God has made it. We revise it at our deepest peril. "If the foundations be destroyed what can the righteous do?" Psalm 11:3.

BN Luke  
Secretary  
12 January 2009

"Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing (i.e. all that is motherhood, Gk TEKNOGONIA), if THEY continue in faith and love and holiness with sobriety" 1Timothy 2:15.

# Introduction

This booklet is a review of 'All One – NT' and 'All One – OT', two papers written by Brother Ian and Sister Averil McHaffie which present a case for the increased participation of sisters in the ecclesia. The preface from the first paper 'All One – NT' is reproduced here in order for the two papers to be introduced in the words of their authors.

"From time to time those who favour a wider participation by sisters are criticised on the grounds that this is contrary to Scripture. Over the years various articles on the subject have been produced in the brotherhood, most arguing that sisters should remain silent in ecclesial meetings. Some of these have been sent to us with the request that we study them carefully. In addition we have examined the Bible in detail for ourselves, as well as commentaries, articles in religious journals, and books on the subject.

It is sometimes stated that the desire for participation by sisters arises from modern feminist arguments. Feminist writers in the world accuse the Bible and particularly the apostle Paul of being anti-women. By contrast, writing from a Biblical position, not a feminist one, we consider that a proper analysis of the Bible and of the apostle Paul's writings presents a very positive approach to the involvement of women.

In these booklets we seek to examine the issues fairly, to be faithful to the Bible as the Word of God, and to explain what we consequently believe to be the correct Biblical application. The conclusion we reach is not based on feminist arguments but on direct Biblical exposition.

We are indebted to a large number of people including those who have already commented on our exposition and offered helpful suggestions. We continue to welcome constructive criticism of anything we write, and will be happy to correct anything which can be demonstrated to be in error. It is hoped that the analysis produced here will encourage others to discuss the subject in depth, to seek to study anew what the Scriptures have to say, and to be faithful to the Bible by putting into practice the conclusions reached."

This review does not directly address the details of a number of the arguments made in 'All One – NT' and 'All One – OT'. It does not, for example, enter into a discussion of the meaning of various words the meaning of which is contested (such as HSUCHIA, 'silence', EXOUSIA, 'authority', KEFALH, 'head', and AUTHENTEIN, 'usurp authority'), nor does it address certain interpretations of

the historical background of the New Testament passages under question (such as the beliefs of the Gnostics).

Such is not the purpose of the review. It simply examines **the method of interpretation and process of reasoning** by which the authors derive their conclusions.

There are many other articles, books, and papers which address specifically the role of sisters from a traditional Christadelphian point of view. Readers will find the following helpful:

- “Man and Woman: Their scriptural roles” by bro M Lewis (published by the Testimony magazine and also available through CSSS agents.)
- “In the Image of God” – a series of articles by Michael Edgecombe, Rebecca Lines and Russell Taylor, currently being published in the Christadelphian Magazine.
- “Male and Female Created He Them” a DVD of seminars held in Adelaide Australia February 2008 (Available through CSSS agents.)

The appendices to this booklet contain other material which provides further challenges to those advocating changes to the role of sisters such as purported by the authors of “All One”.

# Errors of Logic

When reading 'All One - NT' and 'All One - OT', it is immediately apparent that the Biblical evidence has been arranged and presented in a surprising manner. Although a key argument in the overall case is that God's guidance regarding men and women followed a kind of 'progressive revelation' by which the previous guidance in the Old Testament is later developed, and in some cases superseded by the guidance in the New Testament, the two papers did not follow the evidence through in this order, despite arguing that this is how God has presented the evidence. Instead the New Testament is dealt with before the Old Testament.

The clear aim of the two papers is to make the case regarding leadership and teaching by women from a handful of New Testament verses, and then dismiss the Old Testament evidence on the basis that it has been superseded. This is particularly unusual, since New Testament teaching regarding the issue draws explicitly on Old Testament teaching and principles and never presents a case for 'progressive revelation'.

Also the New Testament texts directly related to the issues under question are not addressed first, but much later. An attempt is made to beg the question, by making the case that since Jesus' treatment of women was so radically equalising when compared with that of the society in which he lived, that any and all texts in the New Testament which appear to place limits on leadership or teaching by women cannot possibly be doing so.

**The first 34 pages** of "All in One – NT" establish the fact that the position of women as they were treated by Christ and as they found themselves in the 1st century ecclesia was dramatically different to (and superior to), the position they held in traditional Jewish, Greek, and Roman societies. This is certainly not under dispute. However, even before the specific New Testament texts concerning the roles of sisters are addressed, it is implied that given this context, any interpretation which limits their participation in the leadership and speaking positions of the ecclesia, and any interpretation which identifies brothers as having been given appointments and positions exclusive of women must necessarily be wrong.

This commits the error in logic where the conclusion does not logically follow the premise. From this basis the argument is also made that given the improved position of women within the Christian community, there must necessarily be no restrictions on their participation in positions of leadership and teaching, which would otherwise be contradictory to their new position of liberty. This reasoning commits the error, in which an argument establishing one conclusion is invoked as if it supported a related but different conclusion. These

two logical errors are repeated constantly throughout 'All One - NT', in various forms.

An effort is made on the one hand to argue that they must be understood in the 'context' of the **previously assumed conclusion** (that there are no restrictions on the participation of sisters in positions of leadership and teaching), and on the other to argue that they must be understood in the 'context' of **specific local conditions which did not apply universally**. A careful examination shows that although 'context' is appealed to frequently, in actual fact a false context is assumed in each case.

The fact is that even 'All One - NT' has to end up acknowledging that women were excluded by both Christ and the apostles from certain leadership positions, and certain restrictions were placed on women speaking which were not placed on men. Since this is in direct contradiction to the case the paper is attempting to make, highly strained efforts are made to explain this away.

This is certainly the wrong approach. When a prior conclusion which has been inferred from non-explicit statements is found to be contradicted directly by explicit statements, then the correct response is to amend the prior conclusion. But the paper does not do this. Instead it takes on the very same form as **the standard Trinitarian argument**, that a case inferred from non-explicit statements should be used to interpret explicit statements relating to the same case.

The Trinitarian case is described by Trinitarians themselves to be an inferred case derived syllogistically from statements which never explicitly define God as a trinity. The argument usually takes the form 'These passages say Jesus is God, the Father is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, these passages say there is only one God, so therefore God is three persons', rather than being made from explicit Biblical teaching concerning God. There are no passages in the Bible which teach that God is three persons, and there are many which teach that God is one person.

The error into which the Trinitarian falls is failing to examine the explicit statements first and use them as the control texts (key texts which define the issue). Instead non-explicit statements are examined (Jesus performed miracles, Jesus is 'worshipped'), and from them an inferred conclusion is drawn (Jesus is therefore God). Meanwhile the apostles' own explicit teaching on the subject is completely ignored (repeated statements that Jesus is a man, Jesus is someone other than God, and that there is one God, the Father).

The explicit statements concerning Christ are never addressed first by Trinitarians, but only after the case that Jesus is God has been inferred from non-explicit statements. When the explicit statements are finally approached, the argument is made that that they cannot possibly contradict the case that



Jesus is God, so they must be reconciled with it in a manner which does not contradict it. This is a flawed method of expounding Scripture.

Similar examples could be provided of the same flawed method of interpretation being used to reach invalid conclusions regarding key Biblical issues (faith and works, baptism, Satan and demons, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the atonement, etc). In every instance the methodological flaw is easily discerned by the presence of the following errors:

- An appeal to 'progressive revelation' is almost always made, despite the fact that there are no explicit statements in Scripture indicating that the case is a matter of 'progressive revelation' (unlike a subject such as circumcision or the Law of Moses). Progressive revelation assumes that later revelations replace earlier writings rather than building on them.
- The relevant Biblical material is presented in a contrived manner, with non-explicit, non-specific and sometimes completely irrelevant texts being collected and presented first, and the main case being derived from them by inference, whilst the control texts and other specific and explicit statements are left until later (or dismissed as irrelevant or uncertain).
- It is assumed that the inferred case is the truth, so any apparent contradictions between it and the control texts must necessarily be reconciled by interpreting the control texts in such a manner as harmonises them with the inferred case.

The proper method of interpretation is completely opposite to this. Firstly the control texts should be identified and the overall case should be built on them. They should not be left until last, and they should certainly not be examined only after non-explicit passages texts and passages only slightly related to the issue have been examined. Secondly, non-explicit texts and passages, only slightly related to the issue should be examined once the control texts have been identified, and a case has been made from them, not the other way around. Thirdly, whilst inferred arguments may certainly be drawn from non-explicit texts, if an inferred argument derived from non-explicit texts is found to be in contradiction to explicit teaching on a subject (such as a control text), then the fault is with the inferred case not with the interpretation of the explicit teaching.

Texts such as Galatians 3:28 (which does not address the issue of women holding positions of leadership and speaking in the ecclesia), are not control texts and cannot be used to 'interpret' texts such as 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 and 1 Timothy 2:12-14 (which do address specifically and explicitly the issue of women holding positions of leadership and speaking in the ecclesia).

Where explicit descriptions of the Scripturally prescribed 'right way' of doing things agree with control texts (Jesus appointing only male disciples, and the

apostles appointing only male elders and overseers (PRESBUTEROI and EPISKOPOI), both of which agree with the transparent reading of texts such as 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 and 1 Timothy 2:12-14), but disagree with an inferred case, then the inferred case is at fault and attempts to 'explain away' the explicit descriptions of the Scripturally 'right way' of doing things will inevitably be logically flawed (typically employing the non sequitur or fallacy of the false cause).

**An accurate interpretation must be guided first by control texts and explicit descriptions of the Scripturally 'right way' of doing things.**

It is noteworthy that in the case under discussion in 'All One - NT' and 'All One - OT' there are no passages which can be presented which constitute explicit descriptions of sisters holding the leadership and teaching positions as the Scripturally 'right way' of doing things. This is a telling flaw in the case of which the authors appear aware, yet it is not addressed.

## An Inconsistent Method of Interpretation

Significantly, 'All One – OT' practises an interpretative method which is the exact opposite to 'All One – NT'.

Yet 'All One – OT' candidly acknowledges that the general rule of Old Testament practice is not the practice being advocated.

- 'Leadership by women was the **exception** rather than the **rule**', page 135
- 'Leadership by women is **less common** than leadership by men', page 137
- '**In general**, the judges were men', page 139
- 'Male leadership was often the outcome of society, and **was approved by God for that time**', page 145

Despite these facts, it is argued that general Old Testament practice is contradicted by a list of seven exceptions which (it is argued), prove that Old Testament practice is irrelevant to the practice of the ecclesia.

In 'All One – OT' the few examples of women in leadership positions are considered indicative of God's approval of women leadership in the ecclesia, whilst in 'All One – NT' the consistent appointment by Christ and the apostles of men to leadership positions in the ecclesia is dismissed as insignificant. Thus in 'All One – OT' it is the minority of passages which is used as the control text, and the 'overall context' is dismissed as insignificant, in 'All One – NT' the 'overall context' is used as the control text, and the minority of passages are dismissed as insignificant.

No explanation is provided for such a radical alteration of the method of interpretation (which is not made explicit). There is no harmony in the authors' method of interpretation, which is a serious flaw. That in both cases the conclusions drawn are favourable to the overall case of the authors suggests that the method of interpretation in both instances is being effected specifically to support the authors' belief that sisters should be able to participate more widely in ecclesial leadership.

# Biblical Evidence and a Consistent Method of Interpretation

When the Biblical evidence is approached in the order in which it appears in the Bible, the control texts are given priority, and explicit passages describing the Scripturally 'right way' of doing things are taken into account instead of being ignored, the consequences for the issue under discussion are found to be very different to the conclusions presented in 'All One - NT' and 'All One - OT':

- Leadership and teaching appointments in the Old Testament are almost always male, with female appointments exceptional and extremely rare and women being excluded from certain specific appointments (such as the priesthood and kingship)
- Christ and the apostles continue the practice of granting certain appointments to men exclusive of women, specifically where the leadership of the ecclesia is concerned (elders, PRESBUTEROI and overseers, EPISKOPOI), and such appointments are never presented as being the product of submission to societal norms
- Paul gives commandments regarding women speaking and teaching which are not given to men

Commandments concerning women	Corresponding commandments concerning men
1 Corinthians 11: 3 But I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, <b>and the man is the head of a woman</b> , and God is the head of Christ.	Paul nowhere says that the woman is the head of a man.
1 Corinthians 11: 5 <b>But any woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered disgraces her head</b> , for it is one and the same thing as having a shaved head.	Paul nowhere says that a man who prays or prophesies with his head uncovered dishonours his head. On the contrary, he says they should uncover their head (verse 7).
1 Corinthians 11: 10 For this reason <b>a woman should have a symbol of authority on her head</b> , because of the angels.	Paul nowhere says that a man should have a symbol of authority on his head.

<p>1 Corinthians 14: 33 for God is not characterised by disorder but by peace.</p> <p>As in all the churches of the saints, 34 <b>the women should be silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak.</b> Rather, let them be in submission, as in fact the law says.</p>	<p>Paul nowhere says that the men should be silent in the ecclesias, nor that the men are not permitted to speak.</p>
<p>1 Corinthians 14: 34 the women should be silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak. <b>Rather, let them be in submission, as in fact the law says.</b></p>	<p>Paul nowhere says that the men should be in submission, 'as in fact the law says'.</p>
<p>1 Corinthians 14: 35 <b>If they want to find out about something, they should ask their husbands at home,</b> because it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in church.</p>	<p>Paul nowhere says that if the husbands want to find out something, they should ask their wives at home.</p>
<p>1 Corinthians 14: 35 If they want to find out about something, they should ask their husbands at home, <b>because it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in church.</b></p>	<p>Paul nowhere says that it is disgraceful for a man to speak in the ecclesia.</p>
<p>1 Timothy 2: 12 <b>But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man.</b> She must remain quiet.</p>	<p>Paul nowhere says that he does not allow a man to teach or exercise authority over a woman.</p>

- The following table lists verses described by Paul as based on divinely ordained eternal principles established by God both in Eden and in the Law, rather than the product of submission to societal norms or the product of a fallen world.

Commandments concerning women	Basis of the commandment
<p>1 Corinthians 11: 3 But I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, <b>and the man is the head of a woman</b>, and God is the head of Christ.</p>	<p>There is no reference here to societal norms or accepting the product of a fallen world. Paul starts his argument with the foundation of a divinely ordained hierarchy.</p>
<p>1 Corinthians 11: 7 For a man should not have his head covered, <b>since he is the image and glory of God</b>. But the woman <b>is the glory of the man</b>.</p>	<p>Paul's reason for men uncovering their heads is that he is the image and glory of God. Paul's reason for women covering their heads is that she is the glory of the man. He does not say that men should uncover their heads because of societal norms or Gentile philosophy, nor does he make this the basis of his commandment that women should cover their heads.</p>
<p>1 Corinthians 14: 34 <b>the women should be silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak</b>. Rather, let them be in submission, <b>as in fact the law says</b>.</p>	<p>Paul's argument for the silence of women in the ecclesia is based on the Law. He does not base it on societal norms or Gentile philosophy.</p>
<p>1 Timothy 2: 12 <b>But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man</b>. She must remain quiet. 13 For <b>Adam was formed first and then Eve</b>. 14 And <b>Adam was not deceived, but the woman</b>, because she was fully deceived, fell into transgression.</p>	<p>Paul's argument for women not being permitted to teach or exercise authority over men is based on the order of creation in Genesis, and the events of the fall. The practice in Ephesus is not part of the apostle's instruction.</p>

- The following table lists occasions where Paul uses universal terms of the Scripturally 'right way' of doing things, not emergency measures applied merely to local situations

Commandments concerning women	Universal application, not local emergency
<p>1 Corinthians 11: 16 If anyone intends to quarrel about this, <b>we have no other practice, nor do the churches of God.</b></p>	<p>Paul says this is the way things are done in all the ecclesias of God. There is no other practice. He does not say he is describing a local Corinthian custom.</p>
<p>1 Corinthians 14: 37 If anyone considers himself a prophet or spiritual person, <b>he should acknowledge that what I write to you is the Lord's command.</b> 38 If someone does not recognise this, <b>he is not recognised.</b></p>	<p>Paul says that his instructions concerning the silence of women in the ecclesia are a commandment from the Lord, not a personal expedient he has devised for a local emergency.</p>
<p>1 Corinthians 14: 34 <b>the women should be silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak.</b> Rather, let them be in submission, <b>as in fact the law says.</b></p>	<p>Paul's argument for the silence of women in the ecclesia is based on the Law. He does not base it on societal norms or the product of a fallen world.</p>
<p>1 Timothy 2: 12 <b>But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man.</b> She must remain quiet.</p> <p>1 Timothy 3: 2 <b>The overseer...</b> 8 <b>Deacons likewise...</b> 14 I am writing these instructions to you 15 in case I am delayed, <b>to let you know how people ought to conduct themselves in the household of God,</b></p>	<p>Paul speaks in general terms of 'a woman' and 'a man'. He does not say he is only speaking of the men and women in the ecclesia local to Timothy.</p> <p>In 3:2-13 Paul speaks concerning overseers and deacons generally. He does not say 'The overseers in Ephesus should stop being drunkards', or 'The deacons in Ephesus should not be greedy for gain'.</p> <p>In verse 1 Paul says 'If someone <b>aspires to the office of overseer</b>, he desires a good work', indicating that he is speaking of role of the overseer as an existing office to which some may aspire, not as an expedient he is suggesting as a means of overcoming a local problem.</p> <p>There is no language qualifying the application of these passages to a local area. In 3:14-15 he states explicitly that he is giving instructions concerning how brothers and sisters should behave. He is not simply addressing a local situation, he is telling Timothy how all brothers and sisters should behave.</p>

An unforced reading, with the text presented naturally instead of in an artificial manner and contrived order, together with basic principles of sound exposition, leads inevitably to a conclusion which is the complete opposite of the case being made in "All One".

In summary this review of arguments presented in the two papers has identified flaws in the authors' method of interpretation:

- The papers claim that God's true intention and will for the participation of women in the congregation followed a kind of 'progressive revelation' from the Old to the New Testament
- The papers do not, however, address the Biblical evidence in the order in which God presented it (in fact it is addressed in the reverse order); the papers work 'backwards' through the material, when the function of any 'progressive revelation' requires us to work 'forwards'
- The papers provide no evidence that key Old Testament teaching on the participation of women in the congregation had been completely overturned and replaced with new teaching (certainly there are no explicit statements to this effect in the New Testament, whereas there are explicit statements to this effect regarding circumcision and the Law of Moses)
- The papers present the Biblical material in an order to make a particular case, which suggests immediately that a certain selection bias is going to be present in the analysis of the material (and a closer examination proves that this is indeed what takes place)
- The papers contain a demonstrably flawed method of interpretation, which is not applied consistently



# Contradictory Arguments, Contra - Indicatory Evidence

A study of key arguments in both papers helps to expose the flawed method of interpretation which has been used. Particularly illustrative are instances in which the authors have used arguments that contradict each other, and instances in which the Biblical evidence is contrary to their position.

## What Did Jesus Do?

At least ten times in 'All One - NT' it is demonstrated that Jesus openly and deliberately overturned, broke, or otherwise directly contradicted the traditional views of the day, whether social or rabbinical:

- 'he addressed his teaching and message to men and women alike' (page 18)
- 'Jesus considered that women should learn religious truth. He treated women with the honour and consideration which God had originally intended' (page 18)
- 'From the traditional point of view, Martha's complaint was justified', 'This incident shows how Jesus thought otherwise, and was not prepared to allow the restrictive, traditional position to be enforced on Mary' (page 18)
- 'In John 4 not only did Jesus break accepted conventions by talking to a Samaritan but he discussed religious truth with a woman' (page 19)
- 'The manner of Jesus' involvement with these followers shows a change in the understanding of the part women could play' (page 21)
- 'No other rabbi, as far as we know, travelled with a group of women followers' (page 21)
- 'Jesus also broke with convention in allowing women to touch him in a way which alarmed his more orthodox critics' (page 21)
- 'In his attitude to marriage and divorce Jesus likewise cut across the teaching of his contemporaries' (page 22)
- 'By this approach Jesus opened the way for men and women to mix together socially and ecclesially without the need for the artificial barriers erected by the rabbis' (page 23)
- 'In a very male-orientated society he is shown as revolutionary in his approach to women, as he was in his attitudes on many other matters' (page 24)

Here we see Jesus casting down tradition without fear or favour; throwing aside anything which contradicted his teaching with no concession to the indignation he knew he was provoking. No tradition of men was sacred to him, no social view immune to his criticism, no man made taboo respected by him.

**The significance of this is that for all Jesus' total defiance of custom, social taboos and rabbinical tradition, the fact is that he appointed no female disciples nor gave any of his many women followers a position of teaching or leadership.**

We are told by 'All One - NT' that the reason for this is that Jesus chose to submit to social custom, tradition and rabbinical commandment, apparently out of concern for the opposition and conflict which would have been generated if he did anything different:

- 'In view of the above it might be expected that Jesus would have appointed at least one woman among the twelve disciples. Considering, however, the common religious and social attitudes towards women, it would be surprising if he had done so' (page 24)
- 'Little success could have been expected if Jesus had attempted to appoint women followers in general in a preaching mission, for Jewish attitudes towards woman's authority would have hindered his message. Although Jesus' mission was soon to spread to the whole world, it started among the Jews, and was therefore restricted to what was possible within the Jewish environment' (page 24)
- 'It was only after the resurrection, when the message began to spread world-wide, that women, Gentiles and slaves were able to take a fuller part' (page 24)

Not only is there no evidence for this, but the evidence is completely to the contrary. As has already been described, Jesus spared no custom, taboo, or rabbinical tradition and yet attracted absolutely thousands of followers despite that in doing so he caused widespread controversy and aggravation at every level of Jewish society. Nor is there any evidence that the reason why he chose not to appoint any women as disciples was 'the common religious and social attitudes towards women'.

Previously in "All One – NT" we were told that Jesus 'was not prepared to allow the restrictive, traditional position to be enforced on Mary' (page 18), and yet now on page 24 we are told that Jesus was indeed 'prepared to allow the restrictive, traditional position to be enforced on not only Mary but on all his faithful women followers'.

# What Did The Apostles Do?

A further contradiction is found when the paper attempts to explain why in the apostolic era (subsequent to the ascension of Christ), the apostles continued Christ's practice of appointing only males to the positions of elder, 'PRESBUTEROS', and overseer, 'EPISKOPOS'. Earlier in the "All One – NT" paper we were told that 'It was only after the resurrection, when the message began to spread world-wide, that women, Gentiles and slaves were able to take a fuller part' (page 24), yet when we come to examine the evidence of what happened 'after the resurrection', and 'when the message began to spread world-wide', we find the same pattern of male appointment as existed in Christ's day.

The paper attempts to address this by arguing that the apostles submitted to the inequities of the Gentile society just as Jesus had submitted to the inequities of the Jewish society:

- Since the elders would have a public profile in dealing with authorities, we would not expect a woman to be appointed among them' (page 85)
- 'In view of the general male leadership which existed in society in the first century, and in view of the problems in Crete which Paul was aiming to tackle, it is not surprising if the elders there were all male' (page 88)
- This is in direct contradiction to the previous claim that 'It was only after the resurrection, when the message began to spread world-wide, that women, Gentiles and slaves were able to take a fuller part' (page 24).

Given the opposition to women speaking and teaching in the congregation which we find in the 1st century Jewish community (well documented in both papers), it is remarkable that we find no record of any controversy in the New Testament regarding this. When the apostles taught that the Gentiles could be part of God's plan of salvation, there was a huge reaction from the Jews. When the apostles taught that circumcision was not necessary (at least for the Gentiles), there was an equally dramatic reaction from the Jews. When the apostles taught that the Law of Moses was no longer binding on anyone in Christ (Jew or Gentile), the reaction from the Jews was nothing short of violent.

And yet we are asked to believe that the apostles regularly appointed women to positions of public speaking and teaching in the congregation, yet this elicited absolutely no response from the Jews. This is unlikely in the extreme, especially as 'All One - NT' claims that fear of the societal response was the reason why the apostles did not appoint women to the positions of PRESBUTEROS and EPISKOPOS.

The absence of any controversy is not evidence that no such appointments took place (that would be an argument from silence). But the absence certainly must

be accounted for by those who believe such appointments did take place, especially since both papers argue repeatedly that the social taboos and religious traditions of the Jews were so great an impediment that they prevented Jesus from appointing women as his personal disciples, and prevented the apostles from appointing women as PRESBUTEROI and EPISKOPOI. **Once again the arguments presented contain internal contradictions, and are unsupported by the available evidence.**

## Identifying Poor Reasoning

The evidence thus far examined identifies the method of interpretation being used as **demonstrably** supporting conclusions already decided on. The most telling indication of this is the **manipulation of the method of interpretation** to avoid conclusions contrary to the case, and to reach conclusions which support it. Another indication is the **reinterpretation of texts** interpreted explicitly by Scripture.

For example, it is claimed that circumcision represented a personal relationship of the man with God, a privileged relationship the woman did not share:

- 'Baptism for a woman underlined how much she was now valued as an individual believer. Previously, under Judaism, her commitment was through the male, for circumcision applied only to men. But in Christ she was received into the new movement as an individual in her own right. Baptism was the same mode of commitment for male and female believers, underlining the essential unity of the new movement in Christ.  
*All One – NT, page 24*

On the basis of this assumption it is then argued that since the ritual of circumcision was removed by the new covenant, this privileged relationship with God is no longer restricted to men, and both men and women are free to share with God the same level of relationship. From this it is further extrapolated that no distinctions are to be made between the respective roles of men and women in the ecclesia.

This is an example of contrived exposition. An artificial distinction is invented (a privileged relationship enjoyed by men only, indicated by circumcision), its removal described (the end of circumcision under the new covenant), and it is then argued on this basis that **another** distinction does not exist (distinctions between the respective participation of men and women in the ecclesia), though this distinction is completely unrelated to the first.

Disentangling such reasoning can be challenging, which is why it is so commonly misleading. In this case the primary fault is with the very first premise, though each premise is flawed and thus the entire process of reasoning is wrong. The correct method of addressing the argument is simply

to compare each claim with what the Bible says. An examination of **each part** of the argument follows:-

- Circumcision represented a personal relationship of the man with God, a privileged relationship the woman did not share, the woman being related to God only 'through the male' "All in One - OT" pages 163, 225.

There is no evidence for this in the Bible... The reason for circumcision is made explicit in Scripture (it is the sign of the covenant made by God and Abraham, and Abraham's seed as a corporate body not individuals, Genesis 17:9-14), and even when referred to symbolically or used as an analogy **it never represents a privileged relationship enjoyed only by men** (it is used of the repudiation of the lusts of the flesh, Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6, Jeremiah 4:4, Colossians 2:11).

- The ritual of circumcision was removed by the new covenant to show this privileged relationship with God is no longer restricted to men "All in One - OT" page 225.

Scripture says nothing of this. Throughout the New Testament circumcision is referred to repeatedly, as it became a matter of great contention among both converted and unconverted Jews. In all the verses which address circumcision **there is never the slightest hint that its removal under the new covenant signified any change in the personal relationship of women to God**, though it is stated explicitly that this removal certainly represents freer access to God for the uncircumcised Gentile.

Furthermore, although circumcision was no longer a required ritual (Acts 15:5, 19-20, 24, 28-29), and although the apostles explicitly denied the necessity of circumcision for the salvation of either Jew or Gentile (Acts 15:24, 28-29, Galatians 2:1-5, 11-14; 5:2-3, 6, 15), Paul still carried out the circumcision of Timothy when circumstances required this stumbling block to be removed (Acts 16:1-3).

**If the removal of circumcision under the new covenant really represented the availability of a new personal relationship with God for women, then what was Paul attempting to communicate when he circumcised Timothy?** Was he making a statement about the relationship of Jewish women to God? If so, it was a statement destructive to the authors' case, as by that interpretation it would mean that even under the new covenant there was no change in the exclusion of women from the supposed special relationship with God enjoyed only by men, even though the ritual symbolising it had been removed.

Now that **the premises** on which this claim is based have been proved false, this claim has lost the support which was proposed for it. However, it is still important to examine this claim separately **and see if the Scriptural evidence supports it**. Positive evidence against this claim would not only confirm that it is a false conclusion for the argument previously presented, but would also

mean it is **a false claim no matter which arguments are proposed to support it.**

Is there evidence in the Scriptures that even under the new covenant distinctions remained between the respective participation of men and women in the ecclesia? The answer is yes:

- Christ and apostles continue the old covenant practice of granting certain appointments to men exclusive of women, specifically where the leadership of the ecclesia is concerned (elders, 'PRESBUTEROI', and overseers, 'EPISKOPOI' are always described as male)
- Paul describes restrictions and practices regarding women speaking and teaching which are not applied to men (1 Corinthians 11:3, 5, 10; 14:33-35; 1 Timothy 2:12)

As noted previously, this evidence for distinctions between the respective participation of men and women in the ecclesia is acknowledged in "All One – NT". For example:

- 'In view of the above it might be expected that Jesus would have appointed at least one woman among the twelve disciples. Considering, however, the common religious and social attitudes towards women, it would be surprising if he had done so' (page 24)
- 'Little success could have been expected if Jesus had attempted to appoint women followers in general in a preaching mission, for Jewish attitudes towards woman's authority would have hindered his message. Although Jesus' mission was soon to spread to the whole world, it started among the Jews, and was therefore restricted to what was possible within the Jewish environment' (page 24)
- 'Since the elders would have a public profile in dealing with authorities, we would not expect a woman to be appointed among them' (page 85)
- 'In view of the general male leadership which existed in society in the first century, and in view of the problems in Crete which Paul was aiming to tackle, it is not surprising if the elders there were all male' (page 88)

Leaving aside the explanations given for such a distinction (which are addressed elsewhere in this booklet), the fact is that the evidence for the distinction is undeniable. Such a distinction existed during the ministry of Christ, during the early apostolic era, and even during the later apostolic era near the end of Paul's life. There is no suggestion that this distinction was a temporary measure, a local expedient, or a socio-cultural concession. It is described and practised as normal for the ecclesial community.

In summary the foundation claim that no distinctions are to be made between the respective participation of men and women in the ecclesia is falsified by both the negative and positive evidence. All arguments presented in an attempt to support this claim are necessarily contrived and close examination will prove them logically flawed. This may seem a strong statement, but in the following pages it will be seen that all arguments made in “All One – NT and All One – OT” follow exactly the same process of reasoning.

Arguments typically made are:

- Circumcision is no longer necessary, therefore no distinctions are to be made between the respective roles of men and women in the ecclesia
- The male priesthood has been annulled, therefore no distinctions are to be made between the respective participation of men and women in the ecclesia
- Jesus treated women very differently to the way they were traditionally treated in Jewish society and religious practice, therefore no distinctions are to be made between the respective roles of men and women in the ecclesia
- Salvation is now available to all, Jew or Gentile, and no distinctions are made in this offer of salvation, therefore no distinctions (socially or gender based), are to be made between the respective participation of men and women in the ecclesia

All of these arguments ignore evidence against the argument and yet establish a conclusion and then claim that this supports an apparently related but in fact different conclusion. The very fact that they require the redefinition of concepts explicitly defined in Scripture (such as circumcision and its significance), identifies them as contrived, and therefore the conclusion is not valid.

In summary this review of arguments presented in the two papers has identified inconsistencies in the authors' case:

- **Contradictory arguments:** On the one hand it is argued with regard to Christ's appointment of male disciples; 'In a very male-orientated society he is shown as revolutionary in his approach to women, as he was in his attitudes on many other matters' (page 24), yet on the other it is argued, 'In view of the above it might be expected that Jesus would have appointed at least one woman among the twelve disciples. Considering, however, the common religious and social attitudes towards women, it would be surprising if he had done so' (page 24).

Likewise, with regard to the appointment of men in positions of ecclesial leadership it is argued on the one hand that 'It was only after the resurrection, when the message began to spread world-wide, that

women, Gentiles and slaves were able to take a fuller part' (page 24), and yet on the other it is argued 'Since the elders would have a public profile in dealing with authorities, we would not expect a woman to be appointed among them' (page 85).

- **Contra indicatory evidence:** It is argued that Jesus did not appoint female disciples because he was 'restricted to what was possible within the Jewish environment' (page 24), yet there is no Scriptural evidence that Jesus considered himself so restricted, and much evidence that he felt completely unrestricted.

Likewise it is argued that the disciples were constrained by Jewish opinion and tradition, and the position of women in the wider Greek and Roman society, such that the appointment of women to positions of authoritative teaching and leadership in the ecclesia was not possible due to the controversy it would cause. Yet the evidence demonstrates that the disciples felt no such constraint, the sisters preaching publicly at Pentecost and Philip the evangelist's daughters 'prophesying' (an offence to Jews, Greeks, and Romans), and the disciples prepared to cause such controversy with their actions that they were occasionally jailed.

- **The case not affirmed (negative evidence):** If the key texts really do have the meanings which are claimed by the authors then why the complete lack of evidence for sisters in positions of authoritative teaching and leadership in the ecclesia? **The case explicitly denied (positive evidence):** There is positive evidence in the Scriptures (acknowledged by those promoting the case), that even under the new covenant certain distinctions remained between the respective roles of men and women in the ecclesia.

## Other errors in reasoning - 'All One – NT'

The two papers 'All One - OT' and 'All One - NT' both suffer from a number of errors in reasoning. Examples not covered elsewhere in this booklet are:

- Throughout the work (in a number of different places), the overall argument is made that since we are 'all one' in Christ then sisters must have exactly the same capacity to speak and teach as brothers. Abundant evidence is presented to demonstrate that in Christ men and women have a degree of equality and freedom which is not only significantly superior to that experienced under traditional Jewish, Greek and Roman societies, but also even under many modern Western societies.

However, it does not logically follow from this that sisters must have exactly the same capacity to speak and teach as brothers. A body of



evidence which leads to one conclusion is being misapplied and presented as leading to a different conclusion (fallacy of the irrelevant conclusion). It is repeatedly urged that since men and women in Christ had a degree of equality and freedom which was superior to that experienced under traditional Jewish, Greek and Roman, then the sisters must necessarily have exactly the same capacity to speak and teach as brothers.

- Similarly persistent throughout the work (especially in the second paper, 'All One – OT'), is the argument that the case argued for is valid on the basis that it is particularly satisfactory to many sisters, and that it produces results which are considered to be "good". The consequences of the arguments for the case are in this instance not evidence that the case is valid. The validity of the case rests instead on an exposition of the Biblical evidence
- On pages 28-29 it is argued that since Euodias and Syntyche are described as having 'laboured side by side' with Paul (not 'under' Paul), they must necessarily have had the same position as he did, and must therefore have been able to speak and teach as he did. It is then extrapolated from this that all sisters are able to do the same. But the conclusion does not follow the premise. The fact that Euodias and Syntyche are described as having 'laboured side by side' with Paul does not mean that they had the same role but they worked with him to further the spread of the gospel message.
- On pages 29-30 the same argument is essentially repeated. It is argued that since in passages such as 1 Corinthians 3:8-9; 16:16, 19; 2 Corinthians 8:23; Philippians 2:25-30; Romans 16:3; Philemon 24; Acts 18:26 brethren and sisters are described as 'fellow workers', there must have been no distinction between their roles ('there is no difference expressed in the work they do', page 29, 'When Paul speaks of both brothers and sisters as "fellow workers" (synergoi), those who "work (kopiao) in the Lord", no difference can be seen in the work described', page 33).

Yet in 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, those who 'labour among you' (a phrase previously presented as indicative of sharing the same role), are described as 'over you in the Lord', identifying them as having a role over others which is not shared by all in the ecclesia. This is the fallacy of suppressed evidence. That brethren and sisters are described as 'fellow workers' does not mean that they all had the same role, or that there were no distinctions made between roles and positions of authority. Indeed, on page 33 it is acknowledged that 'This does not mean that all the people described in Paul's letters did exactly the same'.

- The statement that ‘When Paul speaks of both brothers and sisters as “fellow workers” (synergoi), those who “work (kopiao) in the Lord”, no difference can be seen in the work described’ (page 33), is demonstrably untrue. Even if it were true it is certainly not logical to conclude from this that all who are ‘fellow workers’ must have had work involving ‘leadership and teaching as well as action and example’. There is no evidence for this, and the fact that specific leadership and teaching responsibilities are defined explicitly elsewhere as appointments for the brethren (both the Greek word PRESBUTEROS, translated ‘elder’, and the word EPISKOPOI, translated ‘bishop’ or ‘overseer’ are applied only to men), contradicts the argument. If Paul had really intended to teach that all brethren and sisters could undertake identical leadership and teaching roles, it would be possible to identify where he is teaching this. .
- On page 30 Aquila and Priscilla are presented as having taught Apollos, and the comment is made ‘Teaching is evidently one of the activities undertaken by Paul’s fellow workers, as we would expect of those who were spreading the gospel’. There is certainly no dispute that teaching was ‘one of the activities undertaken by Paul’s fellow workers’, but the implication made here is that this proves no distinction was made in teaching roles, which we know is not the case because Apollos at that time was not a brother in Christ, hence the conclusion drawn is not relevant.

On pages 30-32 it is argued that the fact that sisters can be deacons, Phoebe was a PROSTATIS, and Junia may have been an apostle are somehow significant to the issue of sisters leading and speaking in the ecclesia.

In fact none of the examples given contribute significantly to the issue under discussion, and it seems from the carefully qualified terms used that this was recognised by the authors themselves to be of little consequence to the main case (‘Opinion is divided as to how diakonos and prostatis should be understood’, page 30, ‘As with diakonos it is difficult to be sure of the meaning’, page 31, ‘This reference to Junias/Junia has too much ambiguity to prove that women could be described as “apostles”’, page 32).

It appears that these have been included (along with similar material), simply to contribute to the argument that ‘The New Testament states explicitly that sisters were actively and heavily involved in a range of ecclesial activities, so it is highly unlikely that they weren’t also in positions of leadership and teaching the congregation’. This is not a relevant conclusion.

- Chapter 6 of “All One – NT” (“Brothers and Sisters” in the New Testament), argues that since the Greek word ADELFOI (normatively, ‘brothers’), can be a generic reference to both brothers and sisters in certain contexts ‘means that passages addressed to “brethren” refer to all

the believers unless clearly specified to the contrary or unless there is overwhelming reason to suppose otherwise'.

The Scriptural evidence is to the contrary. The primary meaning of ADELFOI is a reference to males who are the sons of one mother. A secondary meaning is to males who share a non-literal 'brotherhood' on a legal, tribal, spiritual, or other figurative basis, or a male who is being referred to with affection. Maleness is the predominant way the scriptures use ADELFOI, where who is referred needs to be established by the context. The broader use of the term as a reference to 'brothers and sisters' on a legal, tribal, spiritual, or other figurative basis is likewise established by context. When the word ADELFOI appears in a text, the natural reading is 'brothers' as a reference to males unless the context indicates otherwise.

For example, the word ADELFOI in the following phrases is typically not translated 'brothers and sisters':

- 'Jecoonah and his brothers', Matthew 1:11
- 'Judah and his brothers', Matthew 1:2
- 'Jesus' mother and his brothers' and 'his brothers', Mark 3:31-32
- 'five brothers', Luke 16:28
- 'his mother and his brothers', John 2:12
- 'Jesus' brothers', John 7:3
- 'his own brothers', John 7:5
- 'his brothers', John 7:10
- 'his brothers', Acts 1:14
- 'the Lord's brothers', 1 Corinthians 9:5

It is significant that the passages using ADELFOI to refer to Christ's siblings are not typically translated as a reference to his brothers and sisters, even though in none of these cases is there any qualification in the verse indicating explicitly that the ADELFOI here are males, and even though we know full well that Jesus had sisters (Mark 6:3). This makes it clear that the natural reading of the word is brothers.

Many times in Paul's letters the reference is to brothers and sisters, and this is determined from the context (typically a greeting or farewell which is explicitly addressed to a congregation).

Paul uses the word ADELFOI (nominative masculine plural), and its declensions ADELFOUS (accusative masculine plural), or PSEUDADELFOIS, 'false brothers' (dative masculine plural), to refer to 'brothers in Christ' as opposed to 'brothers and sisters in Christ' in the following places:

1. 2 Corinthians 8:23: ADELFOI, referring to the messengers of the ecclesia, the context indicating that this refers to three men. One is 'Titus' (verse 16), one is 'the brother who is praised by all the ecclesias (verse 18), also referred to as 'this brother' (verse 19), and the third is 'our brother' whom 'we are sending with them (verse 22).
2. 2 Corinthians 9:3: ADELFOUS, referring to the same messengers of the ecclesia already identified in the previous chapter as three men (see above).
3. 2 Corinthians 9:5 ADELFOUS, referring to the same messengers of the ecclesia as verse 3.
4. 2 Corinthians 11:9: ADELFOI, referring to the 'brothers having come from Macedonia'.
5. 2 Corinthians 11:26: PSEUDADELFOIS, referring to 'false brothers' in Paul's list of dangers he has encountered.
6. Galatians 1:2: ADELFOI, referring to the brothers who are with Paul at the time of his writing the epistle.
7. Galatians 2:4: PSEUDADELFOUS, referring to 'false brothers' who were brought in secretly to spy on Paul.
8. Philippians 4:21: ADELFOI, referring to the brothers who are with Paul at the time of his writing the epistle.
9. 1 Timothy 5:1: ADELFOUS, referring to 'the younger men'.
10. 1 Timothy 6:2: ADELFOI, referring to Christian masters.
11. Hebrews 2:12: ADELFOUS, quoting Psalm 22:22 which refers to males.

Much is then made in 'All One' of the role lists in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, and it is argued that since no gender distinction is made in the lists of these passages, all these roles are available to both brothers and sisters. In the general sense this is true (certainly sisters can be teachers of women and children, as we find in Titus 2:3-5), but in the more specific sense argued for (that sisters can take on every role which brothers may take), it ignores the fact that there are explicit passages elsewhere in Paul's writings which identify certain leadership and teaching positions as specifically the role of the brothers. It also ignores the fact that there are explicit passages elsewhere in Paul's writings which exclude sisters from certain leadership and teaching positions (1 Corinthians 14:34, 1 Timothy 2:12).

- On pages 41-43 (and also in chapter 15), it is argued that since believers in Christ are not under the Law, sisters are no longer restricted to certain roles and positions and may take any they choose. Yet Paul teaches explicitly that sisters still have roles which are specific to them (such as in Titus 2:3-5), and that certain roles are not available to them (1 Corinthians 14:34, 1 Timothy 2:12). Indeed, although believers in Christ are not under the letter of the Law, Paul teaches explicitly that the principles of the Law still apply, and that they are still a guide to the role of brothers and sisters in the ecclesia (1 Corinthians 14:34), the exact opposite of the argument made by the authors of “All One”.
- On page 45 it is argued that in Philippians 4:9 ‘There is no hint that a major part of Paul’s work, preaching and teaching, was an example only to brothers and not to sisters’. This is true; Paul’s entire life was to be an example to others. **But to infer from this that all the roles and positions held by Paul were available to both brethren and sisters is not logical.** Christ is the ultimate example for us all, and we are repeatedly exhorted to follow him as such, but this does not mean that we are able to occupy all of his roles.
- On pages 48-49 the same type of error in reasoning is used as applied to Philippians 4:9. It is argued that since neither the passages quoted from Romans or Colossians refer specifically to gender distinctions in roles, that no such distinctions exist in the ecclesia. **Even if this were true, the conclusion does not follow from the premise.** In fact, we know from other explicit passages of Scripture that such distinctions do exist, so the fallacy of suppressed evidence has been used here.
- On page 52 it is argued with regard to 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 that ‘the normal picture presented in the New Testament is very different’ to this passage, and on page 61 it is argued that Paul’s instructions to Timothy and Titus ‘indicate an emergency response to particular problems which had arisen in Ephesus and Crete’. But although there is evidence within these letters that certain instructions are specific to the local situation, **there is no evidence that the purpose of each letter is specific only to a local situation,** and not applicable to all ecclesias.

The argument being proposed is that ‘these letters contain specific instruction concerning local problems, therefore everything in them is specific only to local problems and not indicative of orthodoxy and the Scripturally ‘right way’ of doing things within the entire Christian community’. On the contrary, Paul’s letters of admonishment are always for the purpose of redirecting the wayward back to the standard beliefs and practices of the entire community, a fact which he sometimes makes explicit (1 Corinthians 11:16;14:33-34). This failure to take other

evidence into account means that **suppressed evidence** is also being used in this case.

- On pages 59-60 it is argued with regard to 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 that 'As far as we are aware, no Christadelphian actually accepts this command as it stands', and this is offered as a justification for the position of the authors. We will not argue whether the authors are correct in this assertion as that is not central to the issue. Many ecclesias will disagree that they do not follow the Biblical teaching of Paul. The central issue is that the Biblical teaching stands irrespective of who upholds it.
- On page 68 it is noted that in 1 Timothy 2:8 Paul uses the word ANDRES 'i.e. "men" as distinct from "women"', yet on the very next page it is argued 'If, therefore, Paul wished to forbid sisters from praying, it is strange that he did not say so precisely, rather than leaving people to deduce it'. But Paul uses a term which refers specifically to the men 'as distinct from "women", **indicating that only men are his subject, just as the following verse applies solely to women.**
- On pages 60, 80, and 88 it is argued that there is insufficient detail or clarity in the passages under discussion to be certain of what they mean ('uncertainties of context, translation and interpretation', 'both translation and meaning are open to considerable debate', and 'their original meaning and application are uncertain' on page 80), and yet a meaning contrary to the standard interpretation is confidently asserted in every case ('We can be confident that', and 'It is clear that' on page 60, 'the passage could be paraphrased and expanded to read as below' on page 80, and 'Though details are scarce this passage does not support the commonly-held view that sisters may not teach brothers but may only teach other sisters or children' on page 88).

This argument wrongly invokes the appeal to ignorance, implying that since we may not be certain of one view but there is no evidence against an alternative view, that the alternative view may be asserted with confidence.

## Other errors in reasoning - 'All One – OT'

This 130 page paper contains ancient history (20 pages), Christadelphian history (22 pages), and discussion of how to implement the change in participation by sisters in our community, together with testimonies of those in favour (about 30 pages). The following paragraphs comment upon what Old Testament evidence is provided.

1. A few arguments regarding Genesis 1-3 are challenged to support the authors' case.

A couple of these are arguably worth contesting, but when the overall strength of the argument against the case is so strong it isn't really necessary. What is notable is that the arguments raised by the authors of "All One" fail even to convince some pro-feminist expositors. The following commentary was written by pro-feminist Biblical professor Kenton Sparks:<sup>1</sup>

**'If this reading of Genesis is accurate, then it is very important for the egalitarian argument.** It will mean that patriarchal authority was not an intention of God either before or after the fall, and it will further mean that patriarchal authority is itself an expression of our fallen humanity. By all means, if we join these exegetical observations about the creation with the theological trajectory that we have already seen in Scripture, then male headship in the family and church is something to be rid of as soon as possible.

**But frankly, I do not believe that this reading of Genesis does the text justice.** Although Genesis 1 describes the male and female as full equals who jointly bear the divine image, **there is no reason to suppose that this is an expression of pure asymmetrical egalitarianism,** especially when this text is situated properly **within its biblical and theological context.** That the woman was made from man to be his helper, and that he twice names her (Gen. 2:23; 3:20), as he does the animals (2:20), **suggests his priority and thus authority over her – just as 1 Timothy 2:11-15 and 1 Corinthians 11:5-10 indicate.'**<sup>2</sup>

**'As for Genesis 3:16, despite egalitarian objections, it remains very likely that the subordination of Eve to Adam is a *prescription* from God** rather than a mere *description* of the fall's natural consequences.

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<sup>1</sup> '...I am prepared to accept a larger role for women in church leadership than church tradition has heretofore permitted', '...the ordination of women to the ministry seems to me entirely suitable as Christian practice', Kenton L Sparks, 'God's Word In Human Words' (Baker Academic:2008), page 354

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, page 349

**As many scholars have noted**, God's judgments upon the serpent, woman, and man in Genesis 3:14-19 are cast in the form of his legal judgments against them. In the case of the serpent and the man there is no question that God has punished each by pronouncing curses, first upon the serpent itself (3:14-15) and then upon the ground that Adam tills (3:17-19).

These are not mere consequences of sin; **they are divine judgments followed by divine acts**, as we are told explicitly in 8:21 (it was God who cursed the ground). On the basis of the judgments received by both the serpent and Adam, **we should expect that Eve's punishment was also by divine prescription**. And this was certainly so. God explicitly tells the woman in 3:16, *"I will increase your pain in childbearing; in pain you will birth children. And your desire will be for your husband, but he will rule over you"* (my translation). **It was the decree and action of God**, and not merely the fall of humanity itself, that produced the hierarchies so endemic to human families and society.

The tendency to think otherwise about 3:16 sometimes arises when the clause "he will rule over you" is interpreted more negatively, as in, "he will dominate you". If this translation were accurate then perhaps we would have cause to rethink the text, but there is no reason to render the phrase so negatively, as if God had done something in the first half of 3:16 that indirectly led men to oppressing women in the second half of the verse.

**The Hebrew masal, "to rule", is standard political language for royal power over one's subjects** (e.g., Ps. 8:7). Whether the exercise of this authority is sinful depends on the one wielding it, **but it remains true enough that women lost ground in the post-fall economy of power**. Genesis 3:16 does not explicitly tell us why **God instituted this hierarchical structure**, but we can surmise that the issue was authority. Just as human societies require divinely appointed authorities to promote order and stability, **so too there is a corresponding need for authority and order in the family**.<sup>3</sup>

This is a remarkable acknowledgement of the 'traditionalist' case from a Biblical scholar who believes that 'the ordination of women to the ministry' is 'entirely suitable as Christian practice'.

2. It is argued that 'Domestic circumstances would frequently have made it difficult for women to be leaders, and in a male-orientated society this would probably be sufficient reason as to why there are only a few women leaders' (page 34)

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<sup>3</sup> Kenton L Sparks, 'God's Word In Human Words' (Baker Academic:2008), page 349



No evidence is supplied for this assertion and it is not explained exactly which 'Domestic circumstances would frequently have made it difficult for women to be leaders'. Both Abigail and the wife of Lemuel are rightly held up as paragons of domestic virtue who were certainly as busy as any other Old Testament wife (and most likely more), and yet it is recognised in 'All One - OT' that both of them held responsible positions which enabled them to take a lead when necessary. Certainly domestic circumstances did not prevent Miriam, Deborah or Huldah from being leaders. In fact these exceptions to the rule completely undermine the claim that in a male-orientated society this would probably be sufficient reason as to why there are only a few women leaders'.

On the contrary, there is no evidence that in Israel's male-oriented society there was any opposition to the leadership of these women, none of whom were opposed in any way. Of all the divinely appointed women leaders in the Old Testament (three), **there is no record of anyone opposing them**, certainly not on the grounds that they were women. There was no social or domestic impediment to women being appointed as leaders **by God**. The fact remains that He gave this role normatively to the men, and only exceptionally to the women.

3. The argument is made that the appointment of males to the priesthood was no indication that their gender was significant in the appointment.

Firstly, it is noted on page 135 that the selected gender of Biblical leaders was the product of society ('male leadership was often the outcome of society, and was approved by God for that time'), which is contra indicatory to the suggestion that their gender was irrelevant to their appointment. Secondly, no actual evidence is provided to support the claim that the gender of the priests was irrelevant to their appointment (fallacy of the false cause). Thirdly, it is argued that since we are 'all one' in Christ, and not under the Law, the restriction of such leadership and teaching appointments to men no longer applies.

The question is asked on page 36, 'Why then should it be considered that only one of the qualifications for priesthood (being male) remains applicable?' The fallacy of the false dichotomy is being appealed to here ('either we are under the Law and the restrictions of the Law apply to us to day, or we aren't under the Law and the restrictions don't apply').

The fact is that the evidence of the New Testament is that the restriction of such leadership and teaching appointments to men certainly does still apply, and the incontrovertible evidence for this is found in Christ's appointment of his disciples, the apostles' appointment of brothers to the position of PRESBUTEROI and EPISKOPOI, and the statements restricting the speech of

women in the congregation (however they may be interpreted, the fact remains that they are restrictions, and there are no such statements regarding men).

Those who keep the Sabbath ask 'Why do you keep only nine of the Ten Commandments, when all of them were written in stone as eternal statutes?' The Biblical reply to this is that of all the ten commandments, only nine are reiterated in the New Testament as binding on all Christians whereas the keeping of the Sabbath is not, but that despite the fact that the literal letter of the law is no longer in force the **principles** of the Sabbath remain binding.

In the same way we find that although the priesthood of the Law no longer applies to the Christian, the **principles** it represented certainly do, and so does the appointment of men to the positions of eldership and spiritual leadership in the ecclesia. Paul appeals directly to this **principle** in 1 Corinthians 14:34 ('the women should be silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak. Rather, let them be in submission, **as in fact the law says**').

There is no need to suggest other causes for the submission and silence of women in the ecclesia, when Paul states explicitly that it is based on a principle in the Law. If this principle was no longer in force, Paul would not be able to appeal to it. It is clear that 'maleness' is being invoked by Paul as part of his argument, and that this 'maleness' relates to a **moral principle** in the Law which is still in force on those in Christ.

The fallacy of suppressed evidence has been invoked by the authors, since they acknowledge elsewhere that Paul is indeed appealing explicitly to the Law of Moses in support of his argument ('All One – NT', page 54), and they acknowledge also that 'Paul elsewhere cites the Law by way of illustration' without teaching that the Law of Moses is binding on Christians ('he never says that Christians have to keep the Law, and never quotes the Law as a restrictive command for believers in Christ', 'All One – NT', page 57). Note however that on pages 55-57 they also list with a number of other alternatives an interpretation which denies Paul is referring to the Law of Moses at all.

4. The very few instances of women leading in various capacities are emphasised heavily, with the argument made that this proves God doesn't disapprove of women leading the congregation ('There is no suggestion in the Old Testament that leadership by women is in itself wrong or unacceptable', page 135), though it is noted 'Leadership by women was the exception rather than the rule' (page 135). It is then argued from this that sisters must have exactly the same capacity to speak and teach as brothers

This commits the fallacy of suppressed evidence (failing to address the other Old and New Testament data), the fallacy of the irrelevant conclusion (that God permitted certain women to lead the congregation in the Old Testament is not evidence that sisters in Christ have the exactly the same capacity to speak and

teach as brothers), and the fallacy of special pleading (the fact that 'Leadership by women was the exception rather than the rule' is an acknowledgment of the fact that men were normatively appointed by God as spiritual leaders and teachers of the congregation).

5. It is argued that 'Male leadership was often the outcome of society, and was approved by God for that time' (page 135)

As demonstrated previously, there is no evidence to support this conclusion. Furthermore, it is argued that the new covenant in Christ overturns all the societal norms, and establishes men and women on the footing which God always intended ('According to the New Testament none of this applies', 'according to New Testament teaching, we can all, male and female, do what the priests did in the Old Testament', page 136).

But if the position of men and women in Christ represents what God always intended, then the significance of men being appointed to the eldership and spiritual leadership positions in the ecclesia (PRESBUTEROS and EPISKOPOS), and the restrictions on women teaching and speaking (however they may be interpreted, the fact remains that they are restrictions and there are no such statements regarding men), cannot be avoided.

The inexorable conclusion is that it is the will of God that men be appointed as PRESBUTEROI and EPISKOPOI (not women), and that women be subject to certain restrictions regarding speaking and teaching which are not applied to men. It is clear that we cannot 'all, male and female' do everything the priests did in the Old Testament, which is perhaps why the statement on page 136 carefully identifies what 'all, male and female' can do as 'enter the sanctuary, and offer sacrifices to God'. That is certainly true. In Christ, we can 'all, male and female', enter the sanctuary, and offer sacrifices to God. But we cannot all perform identical roles. Some positions are reserved for men, some for women.

There is no evidence that women can hold the positions to which both Christ and the apostles exclusively appointed men, and Paul makes it clear that there are restrictions on women teaching and speaking which are not applied to men.

There is no evidence that the New Testament restrictions on women speaking, Christ's appointment of men rather than women as his personal disciples, or the apostolic appointment of men to the eldership and spiritual leadership positions in the ecclesia (PRESBUTEROS and EPISKOPOS), were 'the outcome of society', and 'approved by God for that time' (page 135). They are not presented as any such thing (far to the contrary, they are presented as the divine will), and since both Christ and the apostles wilfully overturned the societal norms of their day, there is much evidence contradicting such a theory. This argument commits the fallacy of the false cause.

# A Study in Comparative Revisionism

Agitation for change in the role of sisters in the ecclesia is not the only change project currently appealing for support within the Christadelphian community. A useful point of comparison is a similar project which (though far more recent in its development), uses the same method of interpretation. That project is for acceptance of homosexuality within the ecclesia.

The following comparison is not made to associate those who support change in the participation of sisters in the ecclesia with homosexuality, nor to argue that the case for the participation of sisters will 'open the door' to the acceptance of active homosexuals within the ecclesia. It is made simply because the two share an identical method of interpretation, and in many cases even identical arguments. Consideration of them within the context of this booklet helps clarify the weakness in the underlying argument about the extended participation of sisters.

For example, a core argument of both cases is the 'all one' argument from Galatians 3:26-28. ("There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." v28)

The case for the extended participation of sisters is made thus:

'If we understand what he says in accordance with the context, **Paul approves of equal service by sisters and by brothers.** Life and service within the ecclesia, according to Paul, **are not divided up by reference to whether male or female, nor whether slave or free, nor whether Jew or Gentile.** Society might still impose restrictions, and it did. **But as far as life and service in the ecclesia was concerned, in Christ you are all one'**

*'All One – NT', page 43*

The so called 'Gay Christadelphian' case is made thus:

'Now imagine a Christadelphian ecclesia that would not fellowship someone because he was in a relationship with someone of the "wrong" gender. That should be an equally appalling thought. From Galatians we know that gender is not important to those in Christ. **No Christadelphian ecclesia should react to a relationship because of the gender or genders involved'**

Source: Gay Christadelphian network website

<http://www.inherit-the-kingdom.org/bible/allone.html>

The two arguments are identical in form. Both take Gal 3:26-29 which makes no explicit comment on the issue under contention, and arguing as if it is a control text. In both cases it is assumed that this is a legitimate method of reasoning.

That both use the same argument does not necessarily mean that that the two arguments for change are both wrong or both right. Each argument must be assessed on its own merit. But in this particular case the use of the passage as a control text is demonstrably invalid.

Such reasoning can be used to support any particular case regardless of the issues involved.

In the following tables it is demonstrated that both cases use the same arguments and logic, and that these are also used by those who support the doctrine of the Trinity. In the first table quotes in the column on the left are taken from 'All One – NT', 'All One – OT', and quotes in the column on the right are taken from the Gay Christadelphian Network website (<http://www.inherit-the-kingdom.org>). The tables are intended to be representative rather than comprehensive.

# Comparative Revisionism – Identical Arguments

Comparative Revisionism – Identical Arguments	
Role of sisters – page numbers are from All One -NT	Homosexuality
According to Galatians 3:28, participation in the ecclesia is not circumscribed by distinctions of gender	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>‘If we understand what he says in accordance with the context, <b>Paul approves of equal service by sisters and by brothers.</b> Life and service within the ecclesia, according to Paul, <b>are not divided up by reference to whether male or female, nor whether slave or free, nor whether Jew or Gentile.</b> Society might still impose restrictions, and it did. <b>But as far as life and service in the ecclesia was concerned, in Christ you are all one</b>’ page 43</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>‘Now imagine a Christadelphian ecclesia that would not fellowship someone because he was in a relationship with someone of the "wrong" gender. That should be an equally appalling thought. <b>From Galatians we know that gender is not important to those in Christ.</b> No Christadelphian ecclesia should react to a relationship <b>because of the gender or genders involved</b>’</li> </ul>
There are no explicit general prohibitions against the case, only qualified prohibitions of very limited application	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>‘We suggest in this booklet that similarly we should all decide by context that <b>it should only be taken as a ban on disorderly speaking</b>’ page 60</li> <li>‘It is clear that Paul is condemning <b>disorderly speaking</b> earlier in the chapter, <b>not properly organised praying or exhortation.</b>’ page 60</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>‘Condemnation not of homosexual relationships, <b>but only of specific abusive relationships or those associated with idolatry</b>’</li> <li>‘<b>but there is no evidence that he was referring to same-sex relationships of any kind,</b> and plenty of evidence that he meant something else’</li> </ul>

**The key words under discussion are of uncertain meaning and can only be used for the case (not against it)**

- 'As with diakonos **it is difficult to be sure of the meaning**' page 31
- 'their original meaning and application **are uncertain**' page 80
- '**uncertainties** of context, translation and interpretation' page 80
- 'both translation and meaning **are open to considerable debate**' page 80
- 'their original meaning and application **are uncertain**' page 80
- '**It is clear that Paul is condemning disorderly speaking** earlier in the chapter, **not properly organised praying or exhortation**' page 60

- '**The correct translation of these words is highly debated**, and there is **no consensus** among Bible translators'
- 'When translators cannot agree on the general meaning of a Greek word, **it is a sign of their uncertainty**'
- '**It is very difficult to say exactly what Paul meant** when he wrote malakoi **but there is no evidence that he was referring to same-sex relationships of any kind**, and plenty of evidence that he meant something else'
- 'As with malakos, we **cannot say with certainty what Paul meant** when he wrote arsenokoites, **but it is clear that it does not refer to same-sex relationships**'

**The teaching of the Law of Moses on this issue is irrelevant since we are no longer under the Law**

- 'The ecclesia is a new creation (Galatians 6:15), **the old order under the Law applies no more**, and this is one of the great truths for which Paul stood' page 43
- 'Paul elsewhere cites the Law by way of illustration. As far as we can see, **he never says that Christians have to keep the Law, and never quotes the Law as a restrictive command for believers in Christ**'. page 57

- 'The prohibitions against male-male sex come from the same part of the law that prohibits sex with a menstruating woman (Leviticus 18:19) and paying a hired man monthly rather than daily (Leviticus 19:13). **If, contrary to Galatians 2:23-25, we are still bound by the "moral" aspects of the law**, then these regulations, clearly moral rather than ritual, should still be binding. No Christadelphian feels that way. **No Christadelphian believes that we are still under the law of Moses**'

## False Doctrine (The trinity) – Identical Arguments

### False Doctrine – Identical Arguments

#### The doctrine of the trinity

**There are no explicit general prohibitions against the case, only qualified prohibitions of very limited application**

- There are no explicit passages saying that God is not a trinity, and those which say God is one do not mean that God is only one person
- When Jesus says that the Father is the only true God (John 17:3), he doesn't exclude himself or the Holy Spirit from being the only true God as well
- When Paul says that there is one God, the Father (1 Corinthians 8:6), he doesn't mean that God is only the Father
- When Paul says that there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5), he doesn't mean that Jesus is only a man
- When the New Testament speaks of Jesus being tired, hurting, dying, and being limited in his knowledge, it's only talking about Jesus' mortal body, not Jesus himself

**The key words under discussion are of uncertain meaning and can only be used for the case (not against it)**

- The meaning of the Hebrew words 'elohim' and 'echad' are disputed, but they actually both speak of a compound unity or plurality in one, specifically a plurality of persons – because of the confusion non-Trinitarians cannot be certain that these words support their case, but despite the confusion Trinitarians can be certain that these words support their doctrine.
- Scholars still contest the precise meaning of the Greek words MONOGENES and PROTOTOKOS, so even though they can be understood of Jesus in a sense which contradicts the Trinity, they should in fact be understood in a sense which agrees with the trinity – because of the confusion non-Trinitarians cannot be certain that these words support their case, but despite the confusion Trinitarians can be certain that these words support their case.



**The teaching of the Old Testament is no longer relevant because the New Testament provides new revelation**

- Whilst it's true that the Jews of the Old Testament era only knew God as one person, this does not mean that He is one person, only that this was all that He had revealed to them at the time – this has now been superseded by the new revelation that God is a trinity of persons

**Scriptural exceptions can be found to the alleged prohibition, proving that there is no prohibition**

- Although God is overwhelmingly referred to using singular pronouns (which would indicate He is one person), there are four passages in the Old Testament in which He seems to be referred to using plural pronouns, proving that God is in fact more than one person

## Conclusion

A flawed method of interpretation will always lead to false conclusions. The traditional case for the trinity, the case for the participation in the ecclesia of openly homosexuals, and the case for an expanded role of sisters in the ecclesia all use the same flawed method, and as a result the conclusions are false in each case.

Scripture, the Word of God, must be used with sound reasoning that leads to the conclusion that God intends. We must be careful not to take our personal opinion and make the Divinely inspired record support it.

# Appendix A: Principles of Interpretation

The following two lists have been written by Christadelphians to help the correct interpretation of Scripture. In appendix B these principles are used to assess the “All One” papers.

The first of these was written by Brother James Foreman, and published in 1859 by Brother Thomas in the Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come (pages 179-180).

## **‘RULES OF INTERPRETATION AND DIRECTIONS FOR INVESTIGATING THE SCRIPTURES.**

- First. Let the Bible define and explain its own terms, figures and symbols.
- Second. Give every passage a literal construction, unless its own connection and phraseology render such a course absurd, by bringing it into collision with truths elsewhere established by positive language.
- Third. The proper connection of any given passage is not always that with which it stands immediately connected, but those bearing on the same subject found recorded anywhere in the Scriptures. Select all these texts from where they stand, put them together and you will have all the truth revealed on that subject.
- Fourth. All passages belonging to any particular subject must contain one or more of the peculiar features of that subject, by which it may be identified as belonging to that subject.
- Fifth. The truth in relation to any doctrine must be established by those passages which speak of it in positive and unequivocal language and those texts belonging to the same subject but which only admit of inferential testimony, no inference should be drawn from them at variance with the truths already established by positive texts.
- Sixth. No doctrine should be predicated upon mere inference, neither upon one isolated text of Scripture. Any true doctrine will be found interspersed throughout the whole Bible.

## **RULES FOR STUDYING THE SCRIPTURES**

- First. In any doctrine taught by types or shadows, the anti-type must always correspond with the type, and the shadow with the substance.
- Second. In studying the Scriptures, consider that the New Testament is a commentary on the Old.
- Third. Never be afraid of results to which you may be driven by your investigations, as this will inevitably bias your mind and disqualify you to arrive at ultimate truth.
- Fourth. Investigate everything you believe: if it is the truth, it cannot be injured thereby; if error, the sooner it is corrected the better.
- Fifth. Pursue this course with as much independence as if you were the only one concerned.
- Sixth. Rely on no authority less than divine in so momentous an undertaking. PROVE ALL THINGS: HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD.'

The second list was compiled by Brother Colin Byrnes of Sydney Australia.

### **'THE CHRISTADELPHIAN METHOD FOR ESTABLISHING DOCTRINE IN SCRIPTURE:**

- 1) When establishing a doctrine all relevant Scriptures must be examined so that a complete understanding of the doctrine can be obtained. We must avoid taking the specific teaching of a single verse or section of Scripture and making a generalisation from it e.g. in 1 Cor 15:42, 52 Paul says the dead shall be raised incorruptible which suggests that we emerge from the grave immortal. However, we have to take into account other Scriptures that qualify this from the immediate context of the chapter and the wider context of the whole Bible.
- 2) A doctrine must be established on the basis of a clear, consistent thread of teaching throughout the Old and New Testaments e.g. the oneness of God is taught clearly in the O.T. and confirmed unmistakably in the N.T. by Christ and the apostles. For example, Deut 6:4, 5 is quoted by the Lord Jesus Christ in Mark 12:29-30 establishing the oneness of God.
- 3) A consistent thread of teaching cannot be overruled by a single passage that appears to be contrary to it. For example, we do not allow the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, (which on the face of it suggests that we are conscious and immortal after death), to overthrow the entire Bible's teaching to the contrary. The parable is not a didactic statement

on the death-state; rather it is a vehicle for teaching the Pharisees a lesson based on their own erroneous beliefs about life after death.

- 4) To establish a doctrine we must move from clear, teaching passages to difficult passages and **not** the reverse.
- i) Christadelphian doctrine is based on teaching passages such as 'Hear O Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD'. People who believe in the Trinity for example, cannot produce passages such as 'Hear O Israel, the LORD our God is three persons in one' or 'to us there is but one God, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost', in support of their position.
  - ii) We must avoid basing doctrine on passages that only infer e.g. Thomas' statement ' My Lord and my God' to a believer in the Trinity, teaches that Jesus is part of a triune Godhead but this view of the statement is based on inference. It is not a statement on the nature of the Godhead but an outburst from a now undoubting Thomas.
  - iii) Doctrine cannot be based on passages that are ambiguous e.g. the Lord's words to the thief on the cross ' I say unto thee, Today thou shalt be with me in paradise ' can be read in two different ways depending on whether we choose to place the comma before or after 'Today'. The correct reading must be governed by the Bible's overall teaching on this subject.
  - iv) Passages on which doctrine is based should not be incidental i.e. passages that are non essential to the main teaching of a book or that do not constitute a teaching statement. For example, Romans, the one book of the N.T. that systematically explains how sin and death entered the world, what sin is and how the life, sacrifice and resurrection of Christ overcome sin and death, contains only one reference to Satan at the end of 16 chapters of detailed exposition. This one incidental reference cannot be used to alter the apostle's argument in the rest of the book by suggesting that a fallen-angel Satan had a role to play in how sin entered the world, what causes sin etc.
  - v) The folly of basing doctrine on highly figurative language can be seen, for example, in the use made of Isa 14 by those who see in 'Lucifer', a reference to a fallen angel devil. We must also avoid taking literally what is figurative e.g. ' this (bread) is my body ', ' this (wine) is my blood ', ' and that rock was Christ' (Matt 26:26, 27), ( 1 Cor 10:4).

The first two verses have been used to establish the doctrine of the transubstantiation of Christ, and the last one as a proof of the pre-existence of Christ. Each is a metaphor meaning the bread, wine or rock represent Christ's body, his blood and his ability to give the water of life, respectively.

- 5) To establish a doctrine we must argue from the rule to the exception and not from the exception to the rule. The rule establishes the doctrine and the exception proves the rule e.g. Christ's resurrection to immortality is the exception which proves the rule that, apart from Divine intervention at the return of Christ on behalf of the faithful, human beings die and remain that way.
- 6) We must acknowledge that the Scripture is based on the inspired teachings of Moses, the prophets, the apostles and the Lord Jesus Christ himself e.g. the apostles' teachings should never be taken as their personal opinions or the mere adoption of rabbinical arguments.
- 7) The meanings of Hebrew and Greek words must be determined:
  - i) by their usage in the Scriptures e.g. using Englishman's or Young's concordances.
  - ii) by the unanimous definitions of recognised lexicographers of the Old and New Testaments. We need to be wary of new word meanings not listed by the lexicographers that are used to support new doctrines and to undermine long-held Christadelphian teachings.
  - iii) in the N.T., Greek words should be determined by a) their usage there rather than in classical Greek, b) their usage in the first century rather than several centuries before or after and c) their usage, as a guide only, in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the O.T. which was often used by the apostles. Even when a word has several valid meanings listed, we must be careful to select the most likely meaning in the context rather than choose a secondary or tertiary meaning that suits our preconceptions.
- 8) Doctrine must be generated from the Scriptures themselves and not from a preconceived theory that we then fit verses to in an attempt to bolster the theory. The concept of a supernatural fallen-angel devil is a church doctrine arrived at by developing the idea first, then finding verses to support it. There is not one passage that says the devil or Satan is a fallen angel. This is just one of many arguments that can be levelled at this doctrine.
- 9) Arguments from silence are invalid except when there are strong reasons to expect that ordinarily the silence would be broken. As an example, if

the devil was a real source of temptation to mankind we would expect James, when explaining how temptation and sin arise in Jas 1:12-15, to have good cause to warn us about the devil but he fails to do so. It is reasonable to conclude therefore, that there is no fallen-angel tempter, particularly in view of the lack of evidence elsewhere in the Bible to support such an idea.

- 10) It is necessary to understand and take into account the cultural background to any Bible passage before attempting to apply the passage to modern circumstances. However, a particular cultural requirement must not be allowed to overthrow any principle in the passage that applies to us e.g. the fact that the Apostle Peter calls for submission to the king, does not mean that American believers can disregard their president. The fact that the Apostle Paul asks the 'strong' to be tolerant of newly converted Jews who would not eat unclean meat, does not mean that we do not have to be tolerant of new converts who are struggling to divest themselves of wrong religious practices just because the practices are other than not eating unclean meats. 1 Pet 2:13; Rom 14:1-4.
- 11) The final test of a true doctrine is whether that doctrine dovetails with all other doctrines in the Scripture e.g. the churches teach that our immortal soul goes to heaven or hell at death but this makes nonsense of the resurrection of the body, rewards and punishments being experienced through the body at judgment and the Kingdom of God on earth.
- 12) The meaning of a section of Scripture must be determined from its immediate and wider contexts. One brother in a study given in 1987 presented the following correct steps for successful interpretation of a Bible passage:
  - i) Interpret Scripture language in its normal linguistic sense having regard to grammatical construction, to the words used, to the meanings of those words based on semantics and Bible usage and to figurative language.
  - ii) Adhere to the Bible's inspired logic, ensuring that each interpretive step is necessary, consecutive and free from assumptions.
  - iii) Check the validity of your interpretations by their agreement or disagreement with the immediate context.
  - iv) Check the validity of your interpretations by their agreement or disagreement with the relevant wider context of the whole Bible.
  - v) Apply each rule rigorously so as to reinforce, not cancel, the effect of the other rules.'

# Appendix B: Comparison of “All One” with the “Principles of Interpretation”

Another method to test the logic of the arguments in “All One” is to compare it with two Christadelphian ‘principles of interpretation’ of which the authors of “All One” speak favourably.

The first of these ‘principles of interpretation’ was written by brother James Foreman, and published in 1859 by brother Thomas in the Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come (pages 179-180). The second was compiled by Brother Colin Byrnes of Sydney Australia. Both lists are presented in complete form in Appendix A.

In the following section a number of the “All One” arguments are compared with points in Brother Foreman and brother Byrne’s lists.

Principles of interpretation
Brother Foreman: ‘Second. <b>Give every passage a literal construction</b> , unless its own connection and phraseology render such a course absurd, by bringing it into collision with truths elsewhere established by positive language.’

Two texts fundamental to the topic under discussion are interpreted in “All One” in a highly non-literal manner.

Firstly: 1 Corinthians 14:

34 “the women should be silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak. **Rather, let them be in submission, as in fact the law says.**”

This is interpreted as saying:

‘Thirdly he enjoins silence (sigan, the same verb) on “the women” – not on those who are speaking acceptably as outlined above (one at a time) but on the women whose speaking is adding to the confused uproar which Paul is trying to stop.’

*‘All One – NT’, pages 53-54*

It is noteworthy that the qualifications included in “All One” do not actually appear in the verse itself. Justification for these qualifications rests on a number of assumptions, inferences, and ‘clues’ which the authors apply to the text (page 54, emphasis added):



- 'There are three **clues** to the fact that it is disorderly speaking to which Paul refers'
- '**suggests** the women were asking questions'
- '**Perhaps** they were taking part in weighing up what the prophets said (verse 29) but in a disruptive and arrogant manner'

When qualifications are added to a text which does not contain them, and when such qualifications are based on inference and supposition, the natural literal reading is being abandoned on inadequate grounds. There is no need to abandon the literal reading in this case. Paul does not say that the silence he describes applies only to 'those who are not speaking acceptably'. This is certainly not 'what the Law says', and it is noteworthy that "All One" omits any explanation of Paul's appeal to the Law here.

The second passage is 1 Timothy 2:12: "**But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man.** She must remain quiet."

This is interpreted as saying:

'Wives who need to be instructed in the Christian faith should learn quietly and submissively. I do not allow a wife, who herself needs to be taught, to teach or to tell her husband what to do. She must keep quiet and learn.'

*'All One – NT', page 80*

The sheer extent of changes and words added to the text indicates that the literal meaning has been left far behind. This interpretation (along with other alternatives), is offered as a suggested paraphrase resting on a number of inferences, assumptions, and suggestions (pages 73-74, 76-79, emphasis added):

- '**Possibilities** of translation include'
- 'There are at least four **possibilities**'
- 'One **suggestion** is'
- 'It **may be** that'
- 'This **may be**'
- '**suggests**'
- 'There are several **possibilities**'
- 'It **may** well be'
- 'Alternatively it **could** mean'
- 'Three ways of understanding his wording have been **suggested**'
- 'There are at least three **possible** interpretations'
- 'There is a third **possibility**'

Firm conclusions cannot be based on unproved inferences, assumptions, and suggestions. The literal reading of the passage does not render it 'absurd' (to use brother Foreman's term), and the only reason why the authors number it among their 'problem' verses is that the literal reading is a problem for their case concerning the role of sisters in the ecclesia.

### Principles of interpretation

Brother Byrnes:

'8) Doctrine must be generated from the Scriptures themselves and not from a preconceived theory that we then fit verses to in an attempt to bolster the theory.'

It is notable that in the case of both verses already considered that almost every conceivable reading is suggested as plausible **except** the natural literal reading. Why is this? The authors have approached this passage with the idea that the treatment of women by Christ and Paul indicates that the natural reading of this passage must be wrong:

'We conclude, therefore, that **the overall evidence of Paul's letters** from approximately 48 to the early 60s AD **shows no male/female distinction** in duties and activities carried out by members of the ecclesias'

'There are two sets of verses, however, **which seem to reverse the whole of this analysis**: 1 Corinthians 14:34-36, and 1 Timothy 2:11-12. How are these verses to be understood **in a way which is compatible with the rest of Paul's teaching and practice?**'

*'All One – NT', page 51*

The last sentence is particularly important, since it demonstrates that the authors approached these two verses with a view to making them fit their conclusions.

### Principles of interpretation

Brother Foreman:

'Fifth. The truth in relation to any doctrine **must be established by those passages which speak of it in positive and unequivocal language**, and those texts belonging to the same subject **but which only admit of inferential testimony**, no inference should be drawn from them at variance **with the truths already established by positive texts.**'

Brother Byrnes:

'**Passages on which doctrine is based should not be incidental i.e. passages that are non-essential to the main teaching of a book or that do not constitute a teaching statement.** For example, Romans, the one book of the N.T. that systematically

explains how sin and death entered the world, what sin is and how the life, sacrifice and resurrection of Christ overcome sin and death, contains only one reference to Satan at the end of 16 chapters of detailed exposition. **This one incidental reference** cannot be used to alter the apostle's argument in the rest of the book by suggesting that a fallen-angel Satan had a role to play in how sin entered the world, what causes sin etc.'

**'We must avoid basing doctrine on passages that only infer** e.g. Thomas' statement 'My Lord and my God' to a believer in the Trinity, teaches that Jesus is part of a triune Godhead but this view of the statement is based on inference. It is not a statement on the nature of the Godhead but an outburst from a now undoubting Thomas.'

The authors commonly draw **inferred** arguments from passages which do not speak directly to the subject, and then use these to interpret passages which do speak directly and explicitly. The following is a list of examples:

- 'The manner of Jesus' involvement with these followers shows a change in the understanding of the part women could play' ('All One – NT', page 21)
- 'Jesus also broke with convention in allowing women to touch him in a way which alarmed his more orthodox critics' ('All One – NT', page 21)
- 'In a very male-orientated society he is shown as revolutionary in his approach to women, as he was in his attitudes on many other matters' ('All One – NT', page 24)
- 'Baptism was the same mode of commitment for male and female believers, underlining the essential unity of the new movement in Jesus' ('All One – NT', page 24)
- 'If we understand what he says in accordance with the context, Paul approves of equal service by sisters and by brothers. Life and service within the ecclesia, according to Paul, are not divided up by reference to whether male or female, nor whether slave or free, nor whether Jew or Gentile. Society might still impose restrictions, and it did. But as far as life and service in the ecclesia was concerned, in Christ you are all one' ('All One – NT', page 43)

None of the passages referred to contain **explicit** teaching on the role of women in the ecclesia, as far as leadership and teaching is concerned. These are all non-explicit texts, yet they are represented as the control texts by which other texts are to be interpreted.

It is noteworthy that pro-feminist Biblical professor Kenneth Sparks (see also appendix C) makes the same point:

**'The context of these biblical texts reveals that, in the game of proof-text poker, the traditionalists have a far stronger hand than the**

**egalitarians.** Whereas the traditionalist verses **speak very directly and specifically to the issue at hand** ("wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord"), the egalitarian **texts seem strained to the breaking point.**<sup>4</sup>

### Principles of interpretation

Brother Foreman:

'Sixth. **No doctrine should be predicated upon mere inference**, neither upon one isolated text of Scripture. Any true doctrine **will be found interspersed throughout the whole Bible.**'

Brother Byrnes:

'**A doctrine must be established on the basis of a clear, consistent thread of teaching throughout the Old and New Testaments** e.g. the oneness of God is taught clearly in the O.T. and confirmed unmistakably in the N.T. by Christ and the apostles.'

As seen in the previous point, the authors' arguments are based on inference. From the positive treatment of women by Christ, they infer that he would have had no objection to the appointment of women to the same leadership and speaking roles as men, despite the fact that he never did and nor did the apostles.

The following is from 'All One – OT' (bold emphasis added):

- 'Leadership by women was **the exception** rather than the rule', page 135
- 'Leadership by women is **less common** than leadership by men', page 137
- '**In general**, the judges were **men**', page 139
- 'Male leadership was often the outcome of society, **and was approved by God for that time**', page 145)

It is very clear from this that the authors of "All One" are well aware that their case is not 'interspersed throughout the whole Bible'. Once again it is noteworthy that this is acknowledged by the pro-feminist commentator Kenneth Sparks:

**'Thoughtful egalitarians will admit** what every complementarian is quick to point out: **that the Bible contains numerous texts that are patriarchal in orientation.**'

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<sup>4</sup> Kenton L Sparks, 'God's Word In Human Words' (Baker Academic:2008), page 343

'The biblical evidence in support of the traditional viewpoint spans **the canon from the creation to the General Epistles**, and the resulting perspective is **remarkably consistent**.'

'Moreover, we have seen already that **many biblical texts either assert or imply male headship in the home and church, even in the New Testament**.'

'So, while Belleville is technically correct to say that "this is the lone New Testament reference to *Adam's* seniority", good theology requires that this text be read **in light of the many other biblical texts that highlight male authority in the home and church**.'

'**A considerable mass of convincing exegetical, theological, and historical evidence supports this traditional reading, as is admitted even by egalitarians like William Webb**. Webb can admit this because, unlike Belleville, **he feels no compulsion to make 1 Timothy say something that it clearly does not say**.'

<sup>5</sup>

### Principles of interpretation

Brother Byrnes:

**'We must avoid taking the specific teaching of a single verse or section of Scripture and making a generalisation from it** e.g. in 1 Cor 15:42, 52 Paul says the dead shall be raised incorruptible which suggests that we emerge from the grave immortal. However, we have to take into account other Scriptures that qualify this from the immediate context of the chapter and the wider context of the whole Bible.'

**'A consistent thread of teaching cannot be overruled by a single passage that appears to be contrary to it**. For example, we do not allow the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, (which on the face of it suggests that we are conscious and immortal after death), to overthrow the entire Bible's teaching to the contrary. The parable is not a didactic statement on the death-state, rather it is a vehicle for teaching the Pharisees a lesson based on their own erroneous beliefs about life after death.'

Readers of "All One" will note that they quote, cite, and allude to one single verse more than any other, Galatians 3:28. In fact it is a cornerstone of their entire case, such that they included a quote from it in the title of each of their papers ('**All One – OT**' and '**All One – NT**):

'If we understand what he says in accordance with the context, **Paul approves of equal service by sisters and by brothers**. Life and service

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<sup>5</sup> Kenton L Sparks, 'God's Word In Human Words' (Baker Academic:2008), pages 339, 344, 349

within the ecclesia, according to Paul, **are not divided up by reference to whether male or female, nor whether slave or free, nor whether Jew or Gentile.** Society might still impose restrictions, and it did. **But as far as life and service in the ecclesia was concerned, in Christ you are all one.'**

*'All One – NT', page 43*

As may be seen above, this is a text that says nothing about the role of women in the ecclesia. To refer to this even as a non-explicit statement concerning the role of women in the ecclesia is unreasonable. Yet the authors claim that the verse is saying that 'Life and service within the ecclesia, according to Paul, are not divided up by reference to whether male or female, nor whether slave or free, nor whether Jew or Gentile' (something Paul never says), and generalise from this that there are no gender distinctions to be made between roles in the ecclesia.

### Principles of interpretation

Brother Byrnes:

**'To establish a doctrine we must argue from the rule to the exception and not from the exception to the rule.** The rule establishes the doctrine and the exception proves the rule e.g. Christ's resurrection to immortality is the exception which proves the rule that, apart from Divine intervention at the return of Christ on behalf of the faithful, human beings die and remain that way.'

The authors recognise many such cases but then draw conclusions which argue against the principle.

- 'Leadership by women was **the exception** rather than the rule', page 135
- 'Leadership by women is **less common** than leadership by men', page 137
- '**In general**, the judges were **men**', page 139
- 'Male leadership was often the outcome of society, **and was approved by God for that time**', page 145)

*'All One – OT' (bold emphasis added)*

- 'We suggest reasons why **sisters were not explicitly included in aspects of leadership**, but we also show ways in which there is good reason to think that **some** leadership was practised by women: e.g. Priscilla (1 Corinthians 16:19), Nympha (Colossians 4:15)' (page 20)

- **'We do not claim** that women were appointed to **all** **the same positions of leadership and teaching as the men** – but there is enough evidence that they did teach and did appear to exercise **some** authority' (page 27)
  - **'That does not mean** that every brother does every job, **nor every sister every job'** (page 47)
- 'All One – NT' (bold emphasis added)*

## Principles of interpretation

Brother Byrnes:

**'Arguments from silence are invalid** except when there are strong reasons to expect that **ordinarily the silence would be broken.**'

In the case of the New Testament, the authors make an argument from silence regarding the appointment of elders and overseers. They argue that since there is no New Testament mention of elders and overseers in Corinth or Rome, this is evidence that not all ecclesias were run the same way, and that not every ecclesia had elders and overseers (emphasis added):

**'It is not clear what kind of leadership existed when ecclesias were first started. There is no New Testament mention of elders or overseers in Corinth or Rome.'** *'All One – NT', page 85*

Claiming that no New Testament mention of elders or overseers in Corinth or Rome' is evidence that not all ecclesias were run in the same way constitutes an argument from silence. The fact is that there is abundant evidence for only one ecclesial model in the New Testament, and that is the model which involves male elders and overseers.

The argument that this is how the apostolic ecclesias were typically organised has considerable support in the form of negative and positive evidence. There is negative evidence since there is no evidence to the contrary, and there is positive evidence that this was standard practice:

Acts 11:

30 "They did so, sending their financial aid to **the elders** [of 'the brothers living in Judea'] by Barnabas and Saul."

Acts 14:

23 "When they had **appointed elders for them in the various churches**, with prayer and fasting, they entrusted them to the protection of the Lord in whom they had believed."

Acts 15:

4 “When they arrived in Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles **and the elders**, and they reported all the things God had done with them.”

6 “Both the apostles **and the elders** met together to deliberate about this matter.”

23 “They sent this letter with them: From the apostles and **elders**, your brothers, to the Gentile brothers and sisters in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, greetings!”

Acts 20:

17 From Miletus he sent a message to Ephesus, telling **the elders of the church** to come to him.

1 Timothy 3:

1 “This saying is trustworthy: “If someone aspires to **the office of overseer**, he desires a good work. “

1 Timothy 5:

17 **Elders who provide effective leadership** must be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard in speaking and teaching.

Titus 1:

7 **For the overseer** must be blameless as one entrusted with God’s work, not arrogant, not prone to anger, not a drunkard, not violent, not greedy for gain.

James 5:

14 Is anyone among you ill? He should summon **the elders of the church**, and they should pray for him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.

1 Peter 5:

1 **So as your fellow elder** and a witness of Christ’s sufferings and as one who shares in the glory that will be revealed, I urge **the elders among you**:

2 John 1:

1 **From the elder**, to an elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth (and not I alone, but also all those who know the truth),

There is no support for the claim that the ecclesias were organised in any other way, or that women were appointed to the positions of elder or overseer.



## Appendix C:

### Selecting the ‘Good Bits’ of the Bible

Many non Christadelphian proponents of the same arguments made in “All One” acknowledge that the case receives little to no support from Scripture.

The following quotations are taken from four notable non Christadelphian supporters of the case for extending the role of women in the church, some of whom also support the case for homosexuality. They are sufficiently open to acknowledge that the case simply does not receive textual support from Scripture. This does not prevent them supporting the case, and indeed they suggest a new way forward for promoting their cause, as shall be explained.

That these commentators agree that many of the arguments of their opponents are Scripturally correct it is evidence that these arguments are not simply the product of slavish obedience to tradition, fear of departure from established ‘orthodoxy’, or personal bias. It is therefore not enough to dismiss them as ‘traditionalist’ arguments, or rehearsals of historic theological oppression.

1. **Judith Gundry-Volf** (Research fellow and Associate Professor (Adjunct) of New Testament – Yale Divinity School) agrees with traditionalist commentators that although **gender equality** in the sense of equal value is promoted explicitly in Paul’s letters, yet **gender distinctions** (in the form of specific gender roles, behaviour, and hierarchy within the ecclesia), are also upheld and reinforced:

‘Further, in Gal 3:28 he affirms gender equality (“there is no longer male and female, for you are all one in Christ”) and in 1 Cor 11:2-16 he expects women to pray and prophesy just as men do in public worship. **Yet there also he insists on distinct headdress for men and women in worship, which symbolised traditional gender boundaries and had hierarchical implications.**’

‘When we come to Paul’s explicit discussion of gender issues in 1 Corinthians, we find that he takes the same basic view as in Gal 3:28 (as I have just described it). **Sexual distinctions are not erased** (as implied in Paul’s statements about **marriage, sex, and gender-specific headdress**).’

**'It would be wrong to claim that Paul rejects all conventional, patriarchal interpretations of sexual difference and their corresponding expressions in cultural and religious practice.'**<sup>6</sup>

2. **Charles Cosgrove** (Professor of New Testament Studies and Christian Ethics – Northern Seminary – Chicago) acknowledges that despite the extremely favourable treatment of women by both Jesus and Paul (far beyond the social norms of their day), neither Jesus nor Paul issues any commandment for a revision of the established theological roles of men and women:

**'Jesus as portrayed in the Gospels treats women in ways that go against the status quo;** his practice transgresses the cultural norms and boundaries that define gender relations and women's proper roles in society. **Likewise, Paul counts women as his partners, as patrons, as prophets, and apostles;** and he teaches his churches that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female.

**Nevertheless, there are no direct prophetic admonitions or arguments in the Gospels or Paul's letters calling for new social relations between men and women.** Apart from Gospel stories that might be taken as exemplary for Christians (e.g., Jesus with Martha and Mary), **instructions on discipleship and community life do not include calls for egalitarian gender practice.'**<sup>7</sup>

On the contrary, Cosgrove continues, in those passages which actually contain specific instructions concerning the theological roles of men and women, the established roles are reinforced rather than overturned:

**'Moreover, where gender relations are directly addressed, the instructions for specific behaviours reinforce the cultural status quo** (1 Tim. 2:11-15 being the most notable example). Thus, the New Testament writers, to the extent that they have a vision of gender equality in Christ, **do not translate that vision into direct paraenesis, exhortation, or instruction for community formation.'**<sup>8</sup>

3. **Richard Hays** (George Washington Ivey Professor of New Testament – Duke Divinity School) says that readers of Paul's words must acknowledge that Paul's theological views and instructions concerning

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<sup>6</sup> Judith Gundry-Volf, 'Putting the Moral Vision of the New Testament into Focus: A Review', Bulletin for Biblical Research, volume 9 (1999), pages 278, 281, 281-282

<sup>7</sup> Charles H Cosgrove, 'Appealing to Scripture in Moral Debate: Five Hermeneutical Rules' (Michigan:2002), page 187

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, page 187

the role of women in the ecclesia (with which Hays himself disagrees), are fundamentally not in harmony with the revisionist case, and cannot be reinterpreted otherwise:

'Regardless of our judgment concerning the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, **we must recognise a certain built-in tension concerning the role of women in Paul's symbolic world.**'

'In his missionary work he joyfully acknowledges the contributions of female colleagues, fellow "workers in the Lord." Yet in some passages, such as 1 Corinthians 11:3-16, **he insists** – with labored and unpersuasive theological arguments – **on the maintenance of traditional markers of sexual distinction**; despite the ingenious efforts of exegetes at the end of the twentieth century, **it is impossible to deny the hierarchical implications of such symbolic markers.**'<sup>9</sup>

Strikingly, Hays even points out that if Paul took any notice of revisionist ideas it was to combat them not to support them:

'Indeed, Paul seems to have found the Corinthian church's experiments **in gender equality somewhat unsettling**; consequently, he sought to **constrain what he saw as excess.**'<sup>10</sup>

4. **Kenton Sparks** (author) has written an extensive work on the interpretation of Scripture, with particular regard to methods of re-interpreting Scripture in order to take into account new historical, archaeological, and scientific knowledge, as well as new legal, social, ethical, and cultural developments. His comments on gender equity and gender roles in Scripture are detailed and extensive. Repeatedly he acknowledges the strength of the traditionalist case:

'**Thoughtful egalitarians will admit** what every complementarian is quick to point out: **that the Bible contains numerous texts that are patriarchal in orientation.**'

'The context of these biblical texts reveals that, **in the game of proof-text poker, the traditionalists have a far stronger hand than the egalitarians.** Whereas the traditionalist verses **speak very directly and specifically to the issue at hand** ("wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord"), the egalitarian texts **seem strained to the breaking point.**'

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<sup>9</sup> Richard B Hays, 'The Moral Vision of the New Testament: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics', (Harper Collins:1996), page 55

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, page 55

'The biblical evidence in support of the traditional viewpoint spans **the canon from the creation to the General Epistles**, and the resulting perspective **is remarkably consistent.**'

'That the woman was made from man to be his helper, and that he twice names her (Gen. 2:23; 3:20), as he does the animals (2:20), **suggests his priority and authority over her - just as 1 Timothy 2:11-15 and 1 Corinthians 11:5-10 indicate.**

As for Genesis 3:16, **despite egalitarian objections**, it remains very likely that the subordination of Eve to Adam **is a *prescription* from God** rather than a mere *description* of the fall's natural consequences.'

'Moreover, we have seen already that **many biblical texts either assert or imply male headship in the home and church, even in the New Testament.**'

'So, while Belleville is technically correct to say that "this is the lone New Testament reference to *Adam's* seniority", good theology requires that this text be read **in light of the many other biblical texts that highlight male authority in the home and church.**

**Belleville's egalitarian treatment** of this very important text from 1 Timothy **is far inferior to that offered by a cadre of complementarian scholars**, who have recently thrown their support behind a more patriarchal interpretation of the text. **A considerable mass of convincing exegetical, theological, and historical evidence supports this traditional reading, as is admitted even by egalitarians like William Webb.** Webb can admit this because, unlike Belleville, **he feels no compulsion to make 1 Timothy say something that it clearly does not say.'**<sup>11</sup>

Sparks even has some very stern words for the feminist movement, despite being a supporter:

**'Egalitarians who assume that equality and authority are mutually exclusive categories have succumbed to an interpretive myopia, which cannot get beyond the oppressive examples of authority present in human society. Scripture gives us every reason to believe that authority need not be oppressive.'**

'Modern feminism has played an important role in curtailing the tyranny and oppression caused by sinful twists of this male authority, **but insofar as feminism wishes to remove these domestic authority structures**

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<sup>11</sup> Kenton L Sparks, 'God's Word In Human Words' (Baker Academic:2008), pages 339, 343, 344, 348, 348-349

**altogether, it is surely a movement that runs out of bounds. As some egalitarians now admit, it may be that extreme expressions of feminism have unwittingly contributed to the family crisis so prevalent in the United States.**<sup>12</sup>

With even pro-feminist commentators, theologians, and Bible scholars acknowledging the overwhelming evidence for the 'traditionalist' case, how is it that they can continue to support their alternative?

The answer is an interpretative device called 'trajectory theology' which involves taking certain passages which appear to indicate a certain 'trajectory' or 'theological direction', and extrapolating from them a position which actually runs counter to the overwhelming Biblical case.

This typically involves arguing from the exceptions to the rule, using minority texts as the alleged 'context' by which the majority of texts should be interpreted, and interpreting those texts we consider to be heading along a 'trajectory' which we judge as what God **really** intended, as the only texts on the issue which should be taken seriously.

Sparks describes this methodology in cheerfully blunt terms:

'In the end, if one wishes to do serious exegesis and to come out as an egalitarian, **there is only one direction to go**: one will have to follow in the footsteps of Paul Jewett, an evangelical who finally concluded that, on the matter of the subordination of women, texts like 1 Timothy 2:11-15 **are simply out of step with the canonical voice and theological trajectory of Scripture as a whole.**'<sup>13</sup>

Remarkably however, despite his own pro-feminist bias and the fact that his own university is overwhelmingly in favour of 'egalitarianism', even Sparks is unwilling to go this far. He is prepared to take 'trajectory theology' as far as the ordination of women to the ministry, and the full participation of women in 'the church', but not as far as the 'egalitarian' perspective requires:

'Because I teach in a university where the egalitarian perspective **dominates the institutional discourse**, it would **serve my advantage** to follow Jewett's lead on this issue. And given that I have made the same sort of theological move in the case of slavery, **it is not the principle of the thing that would prevent me from doing so.**

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, pages 351, 352

<sup>13</sup> Kenton L Sparks, 'God's Word In Human Words' (Baker Academic:2008), page 350

The real difficulty is that, when it comes to gender and theology, **the biblical, theological, and historical evidence for a traditional view of male authority in the home is very strong.**<sup>14</sup>

This 'trajectory theology' is the mainstay of the feminist interpretation of Scripture, and although the authors of "All One" claim they have not written from a feminist point of view there is no doubt that they have used both the methods of pro-feminist commentators and 'trajectory' theologians.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, page 350

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